

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 IO-13 ACDA-07 SSM-03 /101 W

----- 130230

R 260800Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY SANA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8934

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 3001

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PFOR, YE, ET

SUBJECT: DETERIORATING ETHIOPIAN-YEMENI RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY. CHARGE SUMMONED TO FOREIGN MINISTRY AUGUST 25 TO BE OFFICIALLY INFORMED OF GROWING YARG CONCERN AT DETERIORATING YEMEN-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS WHICH CAUSED BY TWO RECENT INCIDENTS IN WHICH ETHIOPIAN GUNSHIP INTERCEPTED YEMENI VESSEL IN YEMENI TERRITORIAL WATERS AND SEIZED TOTAL OF NINE PERSONS. CHARGE'S VISIT TO MFA FOLLOWED BY SIMILAR CALL-INS OF SOVIET CHARGE AND BRITISH AMBASSADOR. END SUMMARY.

2. CHARGE SUMMONED TO MFA MORNING OF AUGUST 25 ON TWENTY MINUTES NOTICE FOR MEETING WITH MFA UNDERSECRETARY HUSAYN AL-AMRI. AMRI TOLD CHARGE HE HAD BEEN CALLED IN AS YARG WISHED TO EXPRESS TO USG ITS GROWING CONCERN AT DETERIORATING RELATIONS BETWEEN YAR AND ETHIOPIA. AMRI INDICATED DETERIORATION CAUSED BY TWO INCIDENTS IN WHICH ETHIOPIAN GUNSHIP INTERCEPTED YEMENI VESSEL IN YAR TERRITORIAL WATERS AND SEIZED TOTAL OF NINE PERSONS. AMRI SAID ALL WERE YEMENI CITIZENS.

3. FIRST INCIDENT OCCURRED AUGUST 9. NO SPECIFIC GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION CITED, ALTHOUGH AMRI SAID VESSEL IN YEMENI WATERS EN
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ROUTE MOBASA TO MOKHA WHEN IT WAS STOPPED BY GUNSHIP. SEVEN

PASSENGERS WERE, IN HIS TERMS, KIDNAPPED. AMRI INDICATED OFFICIAL PROTEST DELIVERED IMMEDIATELY TO ETHIOPIAN CHARGE DEMANDING CAPTIVES' RELEASE. NO RESPONSE HAS YET BEEN RECEIVED.

4. EARLIER THIS WEEK SECOND SIMILAR INCIDENT OCCURRED OFF YEMENI ISLAND OF HANISH AL-SAHIR. TWO PERSONS WERE SEIZED.

5. AMRI SAID HIS GOVERNMENT WISHED TO INFORM USG THAT THESE QUOTE AGGRESSIVE UNQUOTE ACTS WILL NOT GO UNHEEDED AND THAT RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA WILL DETERIORATE QUICKLY IF PMGE FAILS TO TAKE QUOTE IMMEDIATE POSITIVE ACTION UNQUOTE. HE NOTED YARG HAS NOT REQUIRED APOLOGY FROM ETHIOPIA, ONLY RELEASE OF CAPTIVES. HE CITED LONG HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND POINTED OUT YARG HAS BEEN TOLERANT TO THE SITUATION IN ITS NEIGHBORING COUNTRY.

6. USG NOT REPEAT NOT OFFICIALLY REQUESTED TO USE ITS GOOD OFFICES IN THIS MATTER, ALTHOUGH AMRI INDICATED YARG AWARE UNITED STATES HAS CLOSE RELATIONSHIP WITH ETHIOPIA AND THAT US PROVIDES IT WITH MILITARY ARMAMENTS. AMRI STATED COMPLETE LACK OF RESPONSE FROM ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT TO BOTH OFFICIAL AND INFORMAL ATTEMPTS TO RECOVER YEMENI CITIZENS PROMPTED USG BE INFORMED.

COMMENT: AT NO POINT DID AMRI SAY YEMEN PLANNED TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ETHIOPIA IF ISSUE NOT SETTLED, ALTHOUGH THIS REMAINS DISTINCT POSSIBILITY. YAR, WITH SIZEABLE EXPATRIATE COMMUNITY STILL RESIDENT IN ETHIOPIA WOULD SUFFER FROM A DIPLOMATIC BREAK, ALTHOUGH PRESENCE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THW TWO COUNTRIES HAS NOT PREVENTED EPMG FROM MISGREATING YEMENI NATIONALS AND SEIZING THIER PROPERTY. THE KEY WORD USED TWO OR THREE TIMES BY AMRI WAS QUOTE DETERIORATING UNQUOTE RELATIONSHIP.

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